

Power substation moves forward in Herriman

By Jared Page Deseret Morning News
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HERRIMAN -- Despite concerns from potential neighbors, a Rocky Mountain Power substation and above-ground transmission line are getting closer to taking up residence in Herriman.

The city's Planning Commission Thursday night unanimously approved the alignment of a transmission line using single-pole steel structures along 6400 West to feed the planned new substation at 13373 S. Rose Canyon Road.

"We really don't have a choice here," said Grant Mines, a member of the Planning Commission. "This is really just a formality."

In November, the Planning Commission approved a conditional-use permit for the substation and a transmission line along 12600 South to connect the Herriman site with the existing Camp Williams substation in Bluffdale. The route of the power line was appealed to the City Council, which in December remanded the issue back to the Planning Commission.

Design constraints associated with the proposed Mountain View Corridor led Rocky Mountain Power to amend its application for an alternate route along 13400 South, said Michael Doyle, a consultant on the project. A request for approval of that route has been continued indefinitely, although it's expected to come back before the Planning Commission at some point, Doyle said.

To move the project forward, Rocky Mountain Power has shifted its focus to the northern end of the project and the 6400 West alignment to connect the Herriman facility with the Oquirrh substation in South Jordan, he said.

The Herriman substation and transmission line should be constructed this year and operational by June 2008 to meet the growing power demands in the booming southwest Salt Lake County city, Rocky Mountain Power officials have said.

Herriman, which was incorporated in 1999 with a population of about 800, now ranks as the state's fastest-growing city, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released in July. The city grew by nearly 33 percent to 11,226 people between 2004 and 2005, according to Census estimates, and city officials say Herriman's population today is closer to 17,000.

Herriman residents have been fighting the substation since September, even before the power company's plans were finalized. Residents expressed concerns that the substation would be a blight on the neighborhood.

Mayor Lynn Crane has said the city is doing its best to address residents' concerns, but the necessity for the substation makes it impossible to make everyone happy.

Nikolaus Despain, whose home neighbors the substation site, said he'll be one of the unhappy residents, "but I understand that we need to do what's best for Herriman. I have come to the conclusion that this is the best route we're going to get."

In Herriman's January newsletter, Crane explained to residents that the city really has "little influence in the project." The mayor also said public statements made by Rocky Mountain Power officials that the power company will do as the city prefers are "misleading."

"If the power company would do as the city prefers," Crane wrote, "the line would be buried and would not be intrusive in any roadway or neighborhood."

However, state statute dictates that municipalities demanding that power lines be buried are responsible for the additional cost of that action, which is estimated at more than \$3.5 million in this case.

"The city can't afford that," Mines said. E-mail: jpage@desnews.com